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**Rezension zu: Il tesoro di un povero: Il Memoriale di Francesco Bentaccordi,  
fiorentino in Provenza (1400 ca.) / ed. by Simona Brambilla and Jérôme  
Hayez. - Roma: Viella, 2016**

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Traditionally weak rural aristocratic lordships had essentially also broken up by ca. 1300, as had ecclesiastical estates. Partly as a result of these factors, the cloth industry and communal offices were attracting investments and the ambitions of both nobles and nonnobles alike. Within the city walls every phase of cloth production was present. Chapter 3 surveys the institutional, fiscal, and political history of Gubbio from 1300 to 1383. Topics covered include the governance of the Guelf commune to 1350, the period of brief personal rule by the Gabrielli (1350–54), the twenty years of papal control (1354–75), the return of the *popolo* (1375–78), and the failed *signoria* of Gabriele and Francesco Gabrielli (1379–83). Chapter 4 explores the gradual rise and leadership as *signore* of Count Antonio da Montefeltro (1384–1404), built upon the foundation of a symbiotic partnership between *signore* and commune. Whereas the former respected communal laws, received support from the *popolo*, and achieved his own personal ambitions from the arrangement, the latter benefited from effective governance following the period of disorder and political failure associated with the Gabrielli in the early 1380s.

This volume is certainly a worthy addition to the growing number of studies of fourteenth-century Italian city-states. However, there is one very unfortunate and serious flaw: pages 401 through 440 were missing in the review copy. After checking my review copy with another volume obtained through interlibrary loan, I noticed that the missing forty pages were indeed present in the loaned copy. In the future, Viella may wish to make sure that its advanced copies sent out for review are free of such flaws.

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*Il tesoro di un povero: Il Memoriale di Francesco Bentaccordi, fiorentino in Provenza (1400 ca).* Simona Brambilla and Jérôme Hayez, eds.

Scritture e libri del medioevo 16. Rome: Viella, 2016. 530 pp. + 16 b/w pls. €90.

When it comes to studying Tuscans in late medieval Southern France, one usually thinks of prosperous merchant-bankers or high-ranking ecclesiastics linked to the Avignon papacy, who often occupy a predominant place in archival sources. Francesco Bentaccordi, the author of the *Memoriale*, did not belong to either of these groups. Not much is known about him. His manuscript contains only very few autobiographical details, and hints in other sources are scarce. The son of a Florentine bowlmaker (*scodellaio*), he was of humble origins. In the 1390s he arrived in Avignon to serve as a janitor for Cardinal Piero Corsini, a member of an affluent merchant-banker family of Florence and at that time a supporter of antipope Benedict XIII. Beyond this bond of dependence, nothing suggests that Francesco was particularly well connected to other Tuscans in Provence. In 1411—some years after the escape of Benedict XIII and the death of Cardinal Corsini—he pops up again in the small town of Carpentras. For a

decade, he worked as a servant for a widow: for food, board, and—at least in principle—for a small salary, which he actually never received. His French wife, whom he had married in Avignon, engaged in some small retail trade. But she had no success and, when the economic situation got worse, she ended up leaving her husband. Francesco spent the last two years of his life in the almshouse of Carpentras, where he died in 1425.

The *Memoriale*, which has been edited by a team lead by Simona Brambilla and Jérôme Hayez, is a rich and very heterogeneous text, lacking any systematic structure. The manuscript, conserved at the Archives départementales de Vaucluse, was written down by Francesco over a prolonged time span—seemingly between 1397 and 1425. It is written in *mercantesca*—the hand used in contemporary Tuscany (and to a larger extent northern Central Italy) by artisans and merchants—in a leather-bound volume. It constitutes a miscellaneous gathering, which has been compiled for the pleasure of accumulating different kinds of (mainly technical/practical) knowledge: the intellectual “treasury” of a poor migrant. Nearly half of the text consists of mercantile information about numerous European and Mediterranean cities, with detailed lists of commodities, both common and exotic, that could be bought there: a fact that shows that, although Francesco was not part of the elite milieu of the *mercadanti*, he was well acquainted with commercial issues and had access to sources reporting information about far-distant places. Roughly a quarter of the manuscript contains recipes—mainly about medical drugs, but also about cosmetics, colorants, and textile treatments. About a quarter of the *Memoriale* is concerned with mathematical questions related to measures, currencies, and metals. The remaining pages include drawings of animals (unicorns, elephants, dromedaries, dragons) and copies of devotional texts and poems (Dante, Petrarca, Antonio Pucci).

Brambilla, Hayez, and their colleagues have conducted thorough research in French and Italian archives, reconstructing fragments of Francesco’s life and identifying various sources he probably used to write down his *Memoriale*. Codicological and paleographical aspects (I. Ceccherini, D. Smith); mathematical and monetary questions (J. Sesiano, M. Bompaire); the knowledge background of the recipes (E. Artale, A. Sannino, C. Pasqualetti); the literary, religious, and magical culture of the author (F. Zinelli, B. Pagliari); and the iconographic dimension of the manuscript (P.-O. Dittmar, P. Portet) are explored in short chapters, introducing readers to the rich universe of Francesco Bentaccordi. Robust footnotes, a glossary, and different registers efficiently facilitate the understanding of the text. The result of this international and truly interdisciplinary teamwork is a remarkable piece of scholarship providing access to a fascinating and precious source—a source that enhances our understanding of the cultural horizons of a humble migrant laborer who moved between some major centers of his *époque*.

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